

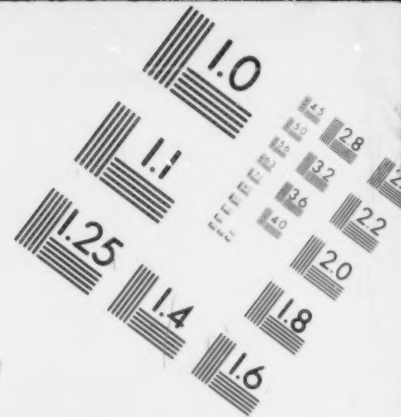
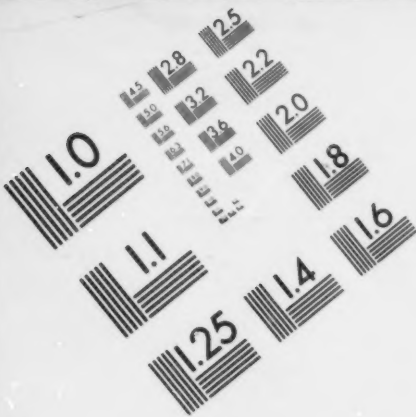
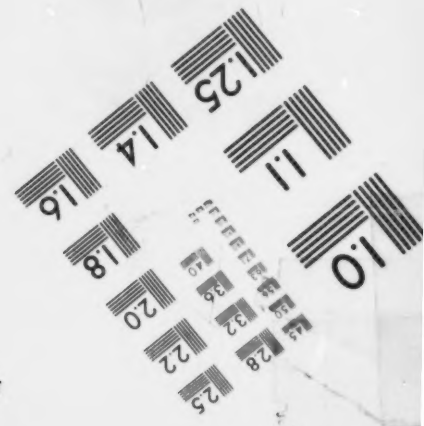
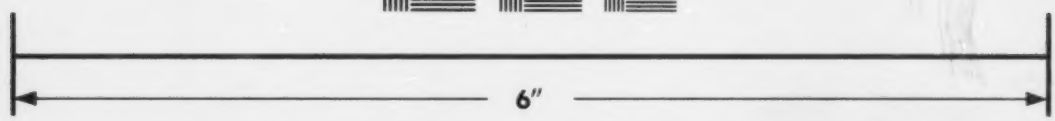
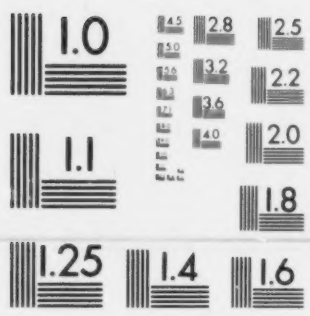


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MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

17 DECEMBER 1985

Iran-Iraq War

A joint staff communique reported by IRNA announced that Iranian planes successfully attacked an Iraqi troop concentration northwest of Faqqah 17 December, inflicting heavy losses and damage.

Syria: Reaction to Israeli Statements on SAM's

Commenting on Israeli statements about Syria's deployment of SAM's near the Lebanese border, Damascus radio accused Israeli leaders of deliberately trying to escalate the situation and increase tension to the detriment of efforts to convene an international conference on the Middle East. Past experience should teach the Israelis that Syria cannot be affected by threats, the radio maintained, adding that the SAM's are defensive weapons feared only by those who commit aggression and encroach on other countries' airspace and rights.

Israel

Alignment members of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee believe that the government must be disbanded if the Likud blocks progress toward resolving the Tabah question, Jerusalem radio disclosed in a report on their private meeting with the director general of Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' office. Peres met with Foreign Minister Yitzhaq Shamir, the radio noted, but no details were divulged of their talks. Peres had earlier informed ministers of his decision to postpone the Inner

Cabinet session on Tabah until next week, according to IDF radio.

PLO Affairs

In an effort to reduce the Palestinian presence in Tunis, "another headquarters" will be established in Khartoum for the Palestinian Leadership, SUNA disclosed. Citing remarks by a "ranking Palestinian source" to *AL-SAHAFAH*, the agency revealed that PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat confirmed the decision in a message to Transitional Military Council Chairman Siwar al-Dhahab.

Libya: Opposition to French Policy on Chad

French President Francois Mitterrand's recent statements on Chad are "lacking in seriousness and responsibility," JANA contended, and the "clear contradictions" in his stance on French military intervention illustrate his desire to continue France's "hated colonial role" and its "flagrant interference" in African affairs.

Algeria

The trial began 15 December of a number of people accused of violating state security, Algiers radio reported, noting that the defendants are also charged with calling for a change in the government, unauthorized assembly, and forming illegal societies.

FBIS**DAILY REPORT
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Keshmand Outlines Plans for Future Constitution*LD161721 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0440 GMT 15 Dec 85*

[Text] Kabul, December 14, BAKHTAR — A significant step was taken five years ago for the realisation of democratic legality with the establishment of the Supreme Court of the DRA.

This was stated by Soltan Ali Keshmand, Politburo member of the PDPA CC and chairman of the Council of Ministers of the DRA, in the fifth anniversary meeting of the Supreme Court of the DRA marked here today.

Soltan Ali Keshmand added that a commission will be set up to draft the future constitution of the country on the basis of the decisions made by the 16th plenum of the PDPA CC in which the expansion of the social pillars of the people's revolutionary power and the adoption of measures for the normalisation of the situation in the country constituted its main objective.

Undoubtedly, the chairman of the Council of Ministers said, in the future constitution of the country the basic pillar of the state and social organisations will be defined, the rights and freedoms of the Afghan citizens will be guaranteed and the judicial system based on progressive and democratic concepts will be foreseen.

The specific characteristics of the country and the Islamic principles, Soltan Ali Keshmand stressed, will be strictly followed in the formulation, development and administration of the judicial system of the country.

PDPA's NUR Ahmad Nur Attends Meeting in Qandahar*LD132349 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 13 Dec 85*

[Excerpt] The heroism and bravery of soldiers and officers of the armed forces in purging the villages and the area around Qandahar city from the existence of counterrevolutionaries were welcomed and commended by thousands of Qandahar's citizens at meetings and street marches in the city yesterday.

Later, those who marched took part in a meeting at the entrance of the Id-Gah mosque, attended by Nur Ahmad Nur, member of the Political Bureau and secretary of the PDPA Central Committee; Mir Saheb Karwal, secretary of the party central committee; and party and government officials of Kandahar province.

Border Tribes Protest Pakistani Mercenary Attacks*LD151048 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0427 GMT 15 Dec 85*

[Text] Kabul, December 14, BAKHTAR — Tens of thousands of the working people in the provinces of Qandahar, Nangarhar, Kuna, Paktia and Faryab have held protest demonstrations and meetings in which the brutal attacks of Punjabi mercenary forces of Pakistan against the free tribes of Khyber region were severely condemned.

The demonstrators issued resolutions in their meetings demanding the immediate withdrawal of the occupation army from the Afridi and Shinwari free tribal region.

Similarly, the worshippers in the mosques of Gardez City, Paktia Province, bordering Pakistan, have expressed their unflinching solidarity with the free Afridi and Shinwar tribes of Khyber region and have vehemently denounced the armed attacks of Pakistani militarists on Pushtun territory.

Judicial Cooperation Protocol Signed With USSR*LD132206 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 13 Dec 85*

[Text] A protocol on cooperation was concluded today in Kabul between the DRA Supreme Council and the USSR Supreme Court. BAKHTAR reports that in accordance with this protocol relations between the DRA and the Soviet Union will be further strengthened in the field of judicial activities.

Prior to the conclusion of the agreement, Nezamuddin Tahzib, president of the Supreme Court, informed the high-ranking USSR judicial delegation about the consolidation of revolutionary sovereignty and securing judicial justice in the DRA.

According to another report, the high-ranking USSR judicial delegation, accompanied by the deputy president of DRA Supreme Court inspected the weapons museum this afternoon.

Melbourne: Afghans May Charge Australian Couple*BK150625 Melbourne Overseas Service in English 0430 GMT 15 Dec 85*

[Text] The Afghanistan Government has indicated that it might charge an Australian couple who were kidnapped by tribesmen in northern Pakistan 7 months ago and taken into Afghanistan. The foreign affairs minister, Mr Hayden, said he had been told that Robert and Jenny Williamson from Melbourne were being held by Afghan authorities. He said that he had been told that no harm would come to them but they would be charged with being in the country illegally.

Mr Hayden said he was very disappointed that the Afghan Government should contemplate this action because all evidence indicated that the Williamsons had been taken into Afghanistan against their will. The Williamsons, who are aid workers in Pakistan, were kidnapped by Muslim tribesmen near the north Pakistan city of Quetta and taken into southern Afghanistan.

AFP: Release Conditions Set*NC161710 Paris AFP in English 1656 GMT 16 Dec 85*

[Text] Islamabad, Dec 16 (AFP) — The Afghan Government has set "conditions" for the release of Robert and Jenny Williamson, an Australian couple kidnapped eight months ago in Pakistani Baluchistan, according to two letters signed with their names and released to the press today by the Australian Embassy here.

The letters, dated October 19, did not say what the conditions were. Australian Foreign Minister Bill Hayden has said the Williamsons are to be tried in Kabul for breaking Afghan law.

The Afghan representative in Islamabad told AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE he knew nothing of the matter and could not confirm that the Williamsons are in fact in Kabul.

The letters said that Sardar Allah Gul, leader of the Sasuli tribe, had been informed of the conditions. Tribesmen kidnapped the Williamsons last May 18 in a successful effort to obtain his release from the Pakistani prison where he was being held on a common-law charge.

Allah Gul was freed early in October and was to have gone personally to find the Williamsons and their Pakistani driver, all three taken against their will into neighboring Afghanistan.

But apparently Allah Gul's movements in Afghanistan were not unhindered, and it was reported recently in Quetta, capital of Pakistani Baluchistan, that he had been arrested by the Afghans.

According to an Afghan refugee in Quetta, Allah Gul was arrested because he refused to adopt an anti-Pakistani position, as Afghan authorities demanded.

The Australian Embassy here, meanwhile, has requested a visa for Kabul in order to send an Australian diplomat to help the Williamsons.

Australian officials have also expressed hope that the United Nations representative at the indirect Afghan-Pakistani talks opening tomorrow in Geneva will be able to induce Kabul to adopt a less rigid stance toward the Williamsons.

At the time of their abduction, the couple had been working on a project organised under the auspices of both the World Bank and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

BAKHTAR Criticizes U.S. Stand, Aid to Rebels

LD170949 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0509 GMT 14 Dec 85

[Text] Kabul, December 16, BAKHTAR: A political observer of BAKHTAR writes:

Assistant Secretary of State John Whitehead said in Washington that the United States is willing to help guarantee an Afghan peace settlement that the United Nations will try to arrange in the negotiations starting in Geneva.

Experience has shown that whenever Reagan Administration talked of the solution of the situation around Afghanistan, simultaneously they increased the financial and military aids to the Afghan counter-revolution.

This time also when Whitehead made his statement, simultaneously Washington administration has allocated four hundred and seventy million dollars for the counterrevolutionary bandits for the continuation of the undeclared war against Afghanistan and for committing ghastly crimes such as arson, plunder, and homicide in the DRA.

So far, over one and a half billion dollars have been spent in this anti-Afghan campaign by the United States and this process is continuing with ever-further intensity. Even the Afghan counter-revolutionaries are given terrorist and military training in the U.S. territory.

The United States is striving to aggravate the situation in the region. According to one of the ringleaders of the Afghan counter-revolutionary bands in Peshawar, a deal was concluded between an authorised representative of the Reagan administration and Ziaul Haq in November this year.

While assessing the results of the USSR-USA summit (?meeting) in Geneva, the representative of Reagan administration expressing the desire of the state circles of that country requested the Pakistani Government not to de-escalate the armed operations against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

The free tribes have been encroached upon by the Army of Pakistan only because the free tribes do not permit the Afghan counter-revolutionaries to use their areas for unleashing subversive activities against the [words indistinct]

The six-day trip recently made by the chief of (?staff) of the U.S. Army to Islamabad, which was ostensibly undertaken for assessing Washington's economic and military deal with Pakistani regime, is intended to give a new impetus to the undeclared war against the DRA.

If the United States is honestly desirous of the solution of the situation around Afghanistan and wants the fratricide to be ended in [word indistinct], it should first of all put a stop to its (?undeclared war) against the DRA and refrain from [words indistinct] military aid to the Afghan counter-revolution.

Dhaka Reports Barter Trade Protocol With PRC
BK141042 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1705 GMT
 13 Dec 85

[Text] Bangladesh and China signed a barter protocol in Beijing today. The protocol envisages a total trade deal of about 300 crore taka in a year. The commerce minister, Kazi Zafar Ahmed, and the Chinese minister for foreign economic relations and trade, Mr Zheng Tuobin, signed the protocol on behalf of their respective governments.

This is the biggest barter protocol ever concluded by Bangladesh with any country so far. It is the outcome of an understanding reached between President Ershad and the prime minister, Mr Zhao Ziyang, for increased, diversified, and balanced trade between the two friendly countries during President Ershad's visit to China last July.

Opposition Criticizes Ershad on Open Politics

HK161034 Hong Kong AFP in English 1004 GMT 16 Dec 85

[Text] Dhaka, Dec 16 (AFP) — Opposition leaders today reacted critically to an announcement by President Hussain Mohammad Ershad that he would allow open political activity from January 1, ending a 10-month-old freeze.

The military ruler in a televised broadcast late yesterday pledged that he would restore civilian rule in this country.

He said he was lifting the political freeze in an effort to attain his goal of holding general elections and achieving a transition to democracy.

From October 1, he allowed "limited indoor politics" for the country's major opposition political parties and alliances which had been sent into hibernation since the March clampdown.

Opposition circles here were today critical of Gen Ershad's renewed pledge to restore civilian government in this country, which he has ruled since coming to power in a bloodless coup in 1982.

Sheikh Hasina Wajed, leader of the major 15-party opposition alliance told AGENCE FRANCE-PRESS she saw "nothing significant" in it. Gen. Ershad's announcement that open politics would be permitted in the new year.

"Ershad is not going to give us political freedom ... but we are going to wrest our political rights from his military regime," Sheikh Hasina said.

"We want to carry forward our struggle to establish a real democratic system — not the kind that Ershad wants to give us," she said.

Begum Khaleda Zia, who heads a seven-party alliance said the Ershad speech had failed to reflect national expectations that the military ruler would announce an end to martial law and set a date for parliamentary elections.

He had said a month ago that his aides would negotiate with opposition leaders to fix an election date after a South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SARC) summit which ended here Sunday.

Lt. Gen. Ershad has announced — and postponed — general elections at least three times in the face of refusals to participate by the two alliances and the fundamentalist Jamaat-e Islami Party.

The opposition has consistently maintained that there could not be any "free and fair" polls under President Ershad's military regime.

Parliamentary polls were last scheduled for April this year, but in the face of the opposition's boycott threat Gen. Ershad again postponed the elections and introduced rigorous martial law.

AFP: Police, Crowd Battle Over Victory Day Parade

HK161401 Hong Kong AFP in English 1356 GMT 16 Dec 85

[Text] Dhaka, Dec 16 (AFP) — At least 20 people were injured in a pitched battle between police and an angry crowd barred from a parade to celebrate today's anniversary of Bangladesh's victory in its war for independence, eyewitnesses said.

Later, thousands of opposition supporters defied a martial law ban on demonstrations and took to the streets, eyewitnesses said.

Clashes broke out early today near Parliament Square when a crowd of several hundred tried to enter Parliament Avenue without invitation to watch an armed forces parade in which military ruler Hussain Mohammad Ershad took a commemorative salute.

Eyewitnesses said the crowd started to throw stones at the police, and clashes broke out.

Supporters of the seven-party and 15-party opposition alliances staged peaceful marches through the city chanting anti-government slogans, despite a martial law ban on such activities, eyewitnesses said.

Baton-wielding riot police on guard at important government buildings looked on as the opposition victory day processions passed by, eyewitnesses said.

At rallies later today, the two alliances resolved to keep up the struggle for an end to martial law and a restoration of democracy.

Lieutenant General Ershad yesterday announced that he would allow open political activity from January 1 after a 10-month freeze.

Today's celebrations marked the 14th anniversary of Bangladesh's Liberation War against Pakistan in 1971.

Editorial on SARC Summit, Future Hopes

BK151704 Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 10 Dec 85 p 5

[Editorial: "Now, Keep It Up"]

[Text] The two-day South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SARC) summit in Dhaka ended on Sunday with the adoption of the Charter of the SARC and the declaration made by the 7 leaders, known as Dhaka Declaration. For the first time in a history of relations, long in need of an institutional framework to direct them in a mutually constructive process, the regional summit has succeeded to a great extent in providing it. Five years of speculation — and occasional pessimism — about a regional corporate body to be instituted and formally launched on the basis of consensus of the countries concerned have ended in an achievement on which all the partners of the SARC can be warmly complimented. Bangladesh as the host country may claim its humble share of the compliment.

The end of the summit is not however the end of the journey. It only begins. The Charter and the Declaration are documents registering the commitments made and locating the areas where the interests of the countries could meet, to mutual benefit. The 9 spheres of such cooperation and mutual activity cover practically the relevant areas where enough potential waits to be exploited to the benefit of each country. The objectives incorporated in the Declaration or, for that matter, the principles on which the Charter is based will take a good deal of enterprise and action on the part of every SARC member to translate them into concrete achievements. One should consider, in this context, Mr Junius Jayewardene's reference to history and the instances quoted by him of nations coming together, making a declaration of their intentions to stay and work together but then falling apart.

The UN charter and the Declaration of Human Rights together with its members and their pledges are a living case in point. What is important is that history, if anything, should be a warning to us and a lesson that unless the Charter is followed in letter and spirit it will go the way similar documents have done.

And that is easier planned than accomplished. The danger lies in the fact that with the initial warmth of feelings wearing off narrower individual interests may get the better of the collective pledge made. And, with such differences increasing, the commitments are forgotten and conflicts follow. Such eventualities however are avoidable, given the logistics that would help keep up the fraternising marking an atmosphere that looked to be free from all inhibitions. This is a rare phenomenon in human, much less in international, relations. The Dhaka summit marking the peak of a week-long cultural rapport, with the popular response evoked by it, produced the most wished-for sense of unity in the midst of diversity. Maybe, the preponderance of the human over the political element in the mutual public behaviour preceding, during and after the summit, has had to do with this.

The need is to keep it up. And that is possible only with a lot of effort exerted during the days following the summit and the promises made at it. To achieve this, two things need doing: One, the interregnum between two summits should be a period not only of active cooperation in the chartered areas. More important is the taking up of those problems, particularly of a bilateral nature at the proper official levels (including contacts between heads of state, if and where needed) for speedy settlement. This is to show that every next summit represents a conscious new step taken toward achieving the SARC goals. And the provisions in the Charter for such periodical meetings and summits, while important, should also be accompanied by a review of activities succeeding every preceding summit, in terms of the objectives of the Charter. Two, one of the most effective means of expanding relations between peoples and countries is trade and commerce. Mutual visits and transactions necessitated by them keep relations fresh. In our earlier comments on SARC prospects we have said that trade has to be on an equitable basis of benefit to the trading partners.

If the human emphasis, characterising the relations at the Dhaka summit could plausibly have accounted for the cordiality noticed there, this is well worth preserving at both government and people's level henceforward between the countries in the region.

Ziaul Haq Arrives, Received by Gandhi at Airport
BK170736 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0730 GMT
 17 Dec 85

[Text] The Pakistan president, General Ziaul Haq, arrived in New Delhi a short while ago on a day's visit. He was received at the airport by the prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi; the external affairs minister, Mr B.R. Bhagat; the foreign secretary, Mr Romesh Bhandari; and officials of the Pakistan Embassy.

Nuclear Issue, Sikhs Likely Topics
HK170918 Hong Kong AFP in English 0823 GMT 17 Dec 85

[Text] New Delhi, Dec 17 (AFP) — Pakistani President Mohammad Ziaul Haq arrived here today on a brief official visit for talks with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on bilateral topics to include the nuclear issue.

Official sources said their discussions would focus on reported plans by Pakistan to manufacture a nuclear bomb and on alleged Pakistani help to Sikh militants demanding autonomy in India's border state of Punjab.

Gen Zia, who is on his way home from official visits to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, was greeted at Delhi's fog-bound airport by Mr Gandhi, his cabinet colleagues, high officials and Pakistani Embassy officials.

There were no airport statements and the welcome ceremony was cut short by the inclement weather before Gen Zia was whisked by motorcade to the presidential palace where he will stay during his seven-hour halt.

The route was decorated with portraits of Gen Zia and Mr Gandhi.

The Pakistani president is to pay a courtesy call on his Indian counterpart Giani Zail Singh and attend a working luncheon hosted by Mr Gandhi.

The two-hour formal talks, which have no fixed agenda, would also cover trade, travel and cultural exchanges between the two countries, an Indian spokesman said.

The spokesman described the talks as "in depth discussions on issues of mutual interest with a view not only to removing misgivings but also to strengthening and expanding bilateral relations in various fields."

Today's meeting will be the sixth between the two leaders who first met here in November last year at the funeral of slain Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

They last met in Dhaka on December 8 when they took part in the summit that set up the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SARC).

Gandhi Claims Proof Pakistan Building Nuclear Bomb
GF151127 Lahore NAWA-E WAQT in Urdu 12 Dec 85 p 1

[Text] New Delhi, 9 Dec — Indian Prime Minister Mr Rajiv Gandhi has stated that if Pakistan does not give up plans to make a nuclear bomb, India will not hesitate to make a decision. Referring to his talk with President Ziaul Haq, he said: Pakistani President Ziaul Haq has assured me that Pakistan has no plans to make nuclear bombs, but the evidence and proof which we have are quite opposite to these assurances.

Mr Rajiv Gandhi was speaking to correspondents at the airport. He told the correspondents, who were accompanying him, that if Pakistan manufactures nuclear arms, there is no reason for India to remain a silent spectator and do nothing about it. He added: During his meetings with me, President Ziaul Haq tried his best to convince me that Pakistan would never try to manufacture nuclear arms, but irrefutable reports India is receiving indicate that Pakistan is making every effort to manufacture nuclear arms.

Gandhi Dedicates Kalpakkam Fast Breeder Reactor
BK160945 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT
 16 Dec 85

[Text] The prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, today dedicated to the nation the fast breeder test reactor at Kalpakkam near Madras and the second unit of the Madras atomic power plant. Mr Gandhi also renamed the reactor research center as Indira Gandhi Center for Atomic Research. Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister reaffirmed India's commitment for the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Expressing India's abhorrence for the use of atomic power for destruction, Mr Gandhi declared that India will always work for nuclear disarmament in the world.

AIR [All India Radio] correspondent, Radhanath Chaturvedi reports from Kalpakkam that the prime minister performed the ceremony in the presence of a large number of scientists, including a galaxy of international nuclear experts. The scientists included representatives from International Atomic Energy Agency at Vienna, Pakistan, China, Bangladesh, and Argentina.

Canadian External Affairs Secretary Arrives
BK170414 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT
 17 Dec 85

[Text] The Canadian secretary of state for external affairs, Mr Charles Joseph Clark, arrived in New Delhi last night on a 4-day state visit to this country. He was received at the airport by the foreign secretary, Mr Romesh Bhandari, and the Canadian high commissioner in India, Mr William T. Warden. Talking to newsmen at Palam Airport, Mr Clark said that his government would like to share its expertise in the oil exploration sector with the Indian Government.

Sikh Extradition To Be Discussed*HK140528 Hong Kong AFP in English 0522 GMT 14 Dec 85*

[Text] New Delhi, Dec 14 (AFP)—Canada and India will discuss further measures to deal with the activities of Sikh extremists in Canada during a three-day visit by Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs Charles Joseph Clark to New Delhi from Monday, official sources said last night.

Canada has already amended its extradition act to enable the government to start extradition proceedings against extremists who committed offences after November 1.

The amendment and certain other steps taken by Canada against the extremists were indicative of a desire to fight extremism "jointly and effectively," the sources said.

The sources would not explain the other steps taken by Canada.

Mr. Clark will start off formal negotiations with Indian officials on establishing an extradition treaty between the two countries, according to the sources.

He will have official talks with Foreign Minister Baliram Bhagat.

He will also call on Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the ministers of finance and energy.

The talks will deal with bilateral relations, including trade and economic assist

Canadian aid in loans and grants to Indian economic development has so far totalled 2.5 billion Canadian dollars.

Trade between the two countries has been heavily in favour of Canada. In 1984, Indian imports from Canada totalled 489 million Canadian dollars, and exports 147.11 million.

Assam Elections Extended Due To High Turnout*HK170638 Hong Kong AFP in English 0506 GMT 17 Dec 85*

[Text] Gauhati, India, Dec 17 (AFP)—An unprecedented voter turnout forced officials here to extend balloting by nearly nine hours to midnight yesterday, officials reportedly said today.

Polling for the Assam State legislature and national parliamentary representatives passed off peacefully, the officials also were quoted as saying in reports here today.

More than 3,500 people died during the last election here in 1983 in violence spawned by a native campaign against alleged illegal Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh and Nepal.

The officials said queues in many places were so long yesterday that voters had to wait for two to three hours to cast ballots, and the deadline for voting was extended from 3:30 p.m. (1000 GMT) to midnight (1830 GMT). The overall turnout is expected to be 75 percent, the officials said, adding that several constituencies had more than 80 percent. A total 9.8 million people were eligible to vote.

Rajiv Gandhi's Congress (I) Party was pitted against the Assam People's Conference, a new party formed by the Assamese natives, in the polls which were ordered after the anti-immigrant leaders and the federal government in August signed an accord ending the violent stir.

Congress-I Party Seen Trailing*HK171038 Hong Kong AFP in English 1025 GMT 17 Dec 85*

[Text] Gauhati, India, Dec 17 (AFP)—Counting of votes in the Assam elections began today and reliable sources said Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's ruling Congress (I) Party was trailing in initial showings.

Congress was pitted in yesterday's poll against the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP—Assam People's Conference), a movement of protest against an alleged influx of illegal immigrants from neighbouring countries.

An unprecedented 75 to 80 per cent turnout was registered in polling for the 126-seat state legislature and for the 14 seats Assam holds in the federal parliament.

Reliable sources in local counting centres said AGP candidates had significant leads in five of the seven assembly seats surrounding the state capital Gauhati after the first batch of votes in the seats had been counted.

Polling was countermanded in one assembly seat following the death of a candidate.

The AGP is contesting 108 assembly and 10 federal seats and the Congress all 125 assembly seats at issue and 13 federal seats.

A United Minorities Front (UMF) which stands against an accord reached this year by Mr. Gandhi with the protesters, was leading in two assembly seats, leaving Congress trailing in all seven local constituencies, the sources said.

In one locality, the UMF polled 700 votes, with the AGP scoring 20 and Congress a mere three, the sources said. But there was no indication as yet of the trend on the 14 federal seats.

Assam was left out of a general election in December because of disturbances over the immigrants issue, which triggered the massacre of 3,500 people in 1983 polls.

Counting was also in progress in byelections held simultaneously for seven parliamentary seats spread over several other states, including one in Delhi.

Former Punjab Governor Arjun Singh is fighting in Delhi as a Congress candidate.

But no information on the voting progress was available from these centres.

MALDIVES

Karachi Reports on Ziaul Haq Male News Conference*BK170334 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 17 Dec 85*

[Excerpt] President Mohammad Ziaul Haq has said Pakistan is willing to enter into an agreement for checking nuclear proliferation at the regional level. Addressing a news conference in Male last night, he said we appeal to certain nuclear-weapons states not to use nuclear weapons while urging nonnuclear ones not to acquire such weapons. In reply to a question, the president said the Maldives not only shares Pakistan's concern over the Afghan problem but has also supported Pakistan's stand at various forums. He said it is a highly complicated issue because of the involvement of a superpower on the one hand and the struggle of a small country for its right of self-determination and independence on the other. As the Afghan problem can be resolved only through political negotiations, we are holding indirect talks. The sixth round of Geneva talks has begun, and if it ends even in paving the way for the seventh round, then it can be considered a success.

About the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the president said that it has now become a reality and there are bright prospects for the expansion of cooperation among member nations.

About his talks with President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, the president said they have been very useful and purposeful. The federal finance minister, Dr Mahbubul Haq, said at the president's news conference that Pakistan is ready to provide loans to the Maldives on easy terms to import rice, flour, cement, and machinery. Pakistan is also willing to provide technical consulting services and financial assistance for a drinking water supply project in Male. It will also provide training and educational facilities to the Maldives in various fields.

NEPAL

25th Anniversary of 'Partyless System' Celebrated*HK161433 Hong Kong AFP in English 1431 GMT 16 Dec 85*

[Text] Kathmandu, Dec 16 (AFP) — More than 100,000 people joined a procession in Kathmandu today to mark the silver jubilee of the establishment of the partyless Panchayat System in Nepal, officials said.

Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand led the procession which included rank and file Panchayat workers, senior military, judicial and civilian officials, and students and which ended with a public rally.

A lifesize portrait of the late King Mahendra, who introduced the Panchayat system 25 years ago today after the dissolution of the country's first parliamentary system of government, was carried through the procession in a horsedrawn carriage.

Addressing the rally, King Birendra recalled the socio-economic and political achievements under the partyless Panchayat System introduced by his late father 25 years ago.

Some developing nations in Asia and Africa had "not only suffered from oppression and tyranny but even lost their identity as a free nation" in that time, he said.

"When we think of these countries' changes, we are fully convinced that the partyless Panchayat policy has indeed made a positive contribution to establish an enduring political stability in Nepal."

He added: "Let us pledge that we in the remaining years of the century will be able to shake off the poverty imposed on us by our least developed economy and that by the year 2000 we will be able to achieve a standard of living which is adequate to lead a life with human dignity."

Issuance of Import Licenses Suspended Indefinitely*HK170338 Hong Kong AFP in English 0158 GMT 17 Dec 85*

[Text] Kathmandu, Dec 17 (AFP) — Nepal has suspended the issuance of import licences indefinitely, in what economic experts said was a bid to prevent a further drop in the foreign exchange.

A Commerce Department official said the department had received instructions from the Finance Ministry to suspend the issuance of licences for commercial imports until further notification.

The government gave no explanation for the move, but it followed within two weeks of a 14.7 per cent devaluation of the Nepalese rupee to all other currencies.

A source from the Rastra Bank, the country's central bank, said that Nepal's total imports stood at 1,284 million rupees (62.9 million dollars) during the first two months of the current fiscal year mid-July to mid-September.

Economic experts here said the exports figures in the next six months were expected to cause a sharp shortfall because of an earlier announcement withdrawing a 10 per cent cash subsidy given to exporters. The grant was dropped because of a 17.24 percent appreciation of the foreign currencies against the Nepal rupee.

Foreign Secretary Named New Envoy to United States*HK170640 Hong Kong AFP in English 0606 GMT 17 Dec 85*

[Text] Kathmandu, Dec 17 (AFP) — King Birendra has appointed Foreign Secretary Biswo Pradhan as Nepal's U.S. ambassador, it was officially announced here today.

Mr Pradhan succeeds Bhekh Bahadur Thapa, who recently returned here after completing a term in Washington.

The new ambassador served as first secretary in the Washington Embassy 12 years ago, and has been foreign secretary for three years.

He was Nepal's ambassador in Cairo from 1973-77.

The former ambassador in Moscow, Narendra Bikram Shah, is expected to replace Mr Pradhan as foreign secretary, well-informed sources said here.

SRI LANKA

Pakistani President Denies Supplying Arms

OW160357 Tokyo KYODO in English 0328 GMT 16 Dec 85

[Text] Colombo, Dec. 16 KYODO — Pakistani President Mohammad Ziaul Haq expressed strong support Sunday for Sri Lanka's efforts to maintain its territorial integrity against Tamil separatism and implicitly urged other countries to provide arms to fight Tamil guerrillas.

Zia said all friends and neighbors of Sri Lanka should support the government's policy morally, politically, economically and in every other way "without reservations."

But at a press conference before leaving at the end of a five-day official visit, Zia denied that Pakistan itself had provided arms to Sri Lanka in its fight against Tamils and said his country was not a "weapons trading" nation.

Asked about an Indian charge that Pakistan is helping Sikh extremists in the Punjab, Zia said neighboring countries should not "harbor terrorists."

He denied that Pakistan was helping extremists against India and said that he supported India's territorial integrity. "Pakistan denounces terrorism in all its forms," he said.

He also denied that Pakistan was on the way to acquiring nuclear weapons. He said Pakistan's nuclear program was a "modest, experimental program" and the country did not have the scientific capability or the technological facilities to develop a nuclear weapon.

Zia left for a two-day visit to the Maldives, after which he will go to India for talks with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Security Sources on Arms Supplies, Weekend Raids

HK170825 Hong Kong AFP in English 0732 GMT 17 Dec 85

[Text] Colombo, Dec 17 (AFP) — Sri Lankan security forces are using South African-made armoured cars, high-ranking security sources confirmed here today.

However, they denied allegations by the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) in southern India that Sri Lanka was using 48 of the vehicles in northern and eastern Sri Lanka.

They said Sri Lanka was deploying fewer than this, but gave no further details.

National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali told AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE that the security forces had increased in numbers and had been supplied with more sophisticated weapons and armaments this year, but would not give details for "obvious security reasons."

Security sources said that Sri Lanka had bought U.S.-built helicopters, Italian fighter planes, Israeli patrol craft, British Scout cars and Chinese small arms as well as South African armoured cars.

(The EPRLF said in a statement in India today that Sri Lanka had acquired South African armoured cars to combat remote-controlled explosive devices planted under roads and bridges by Tamil militants, the UNITED NEWS OF INDIA (UNI) said.)

A section of Sri Lanka's 2.5 million Tamil minority have been waging a frequently bloody campaign for greater autonomy in the north and east, complaining of discrimination by the Sinhala majority.

The security sources also denied allegations today by the EPRLF that security forces killed at least 78 Tamils in three raids in the northeastern Trincomalee District over the weekend.

Security forces had raided some military Tamil hideouts in the Trincomalee area Friday and Saturday, they said, "but it is totally false to say that we killed 78 Tamils in these raids."

"We took into custody 60 Tamils" and one person had been killed in the raids, they added.

Khomeyni Receives Families of Martyrs, MIA's, POW's
LD170723 Tehran IRNA in English 0718 GMT 17 Dec 85

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 17, IRNA — Imam Khomeyni, the leader of the revolution and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, here Monday received Friday prayers leader of Shiraz, Hojjat ol-Eslam Haeri, Martyr Ayatollah Dastgheyb's son Hojjat ol-Eslam Hashem Dastgheyb and also a large group of families of martyrs from provincial cities.

The visitors also included families of missing in action and prisoners of war from Maragheh, east Azarbaijan Province, Tehran, and Karaj, near Tehran.

During the meeting head of the martyrs foundation who is also imam's representative to the foundation, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mehdi Karrubi, praised role of the families of the martyrs and thanked them on behalf of the imam.

At the end of the meeting Imam Khomeyni replied to the enthusiasm of the visitors.

Friday Sermon Questions Human Rights in U.S.

LD131216 Tehran IRNA in English 1208 GMT 13 Dec 85

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 13 IRNA — Tehran's temporary leader of Friday mass prayers, Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani reiterated here Friday that the Islamic Republic knew when and how to inflict "our blow on the enemy." He said the recent maneuvers by the Iranian Navy in the Persian Gulf waters proved to the enemies that "we are capable of action", in which case, he said, at least one third of the world would suffer from discontinuation of oil flow through the Persian Gulf.

The speaker of the Majlis (Parliament) who was addressing a huge crowd of Muslim worshippers at the Tehran University campus and nearby streets, also described as "very bitter" for global arrogance and enemies of the Islamic Revolution, Iran's recent move in deciding the future leader of the Islamic revolution, after Imam Khomeyni.

He said the enemies, being extremely upset with Iran's timely decision in settling the issue of the future leadership, had resorted to the "trusted weapon of human rights breach" in the Islamic Republic. He said the U.S. and its agents, themselves being most blatant violators of human rights throughout the globe, would not vote for anything less than "our captivity".

He said intimidated by Iran's future offensive, the arrogance was this time shouting in favor of "human rights", and the U.S. President was defending a handful of Bahai spies and raised the execution of several spies as a document that human rights are being violated by the Islamic Republic. But, the Majlis speaker asked, whether U.S. crimes throughout the globe, its elimination of the native Indians generation in America, its crimes against blacks, and tens of other instances of inhuman crimes, were not the breach of human rights? "Wasn't the mutilation of (Iranian Muslim) worshippers (at the site of Tehran Friday prayers) by agents of arrogance a violation of human rights?" he asked.

He said they were raising these issues with the wrong assumption that it would be effective against Iran. But, he said, they have not yet known Islam, the Islamic Revolution of Iran and the Iranian nation.

Further Report

LD131657 Tehran IRNA in English 1640 GMT 13 Dec 85

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 13, IRNA — Majlis speaker and substitute leader of the Friday congregational prayers in Tehran Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said here Friday that the U.S. Government is the most obvious example of an inhuman government because of its crimes against humanity in the United States, in South East Asia, in Latin America, in Nicaragua, and elsewhere throughout the globe.

He said despite its being so, and despite the very shameful aid it has been providing to the enemies of the Islamic Revolution in the United States Washington claims to be concerned about the status of human rights in Iran.

Rafsanjani, who was speaking to a multitudinous group of worshippers at the Friday mass prayers, said the United States and other Western governments are angry with Iran primarily because their various schemes for undermining the Islamic Revolution and pitting the masses against the Islamic government have backfired and resulted in steadily increasing mass support for the war and increasing mass contribution to the war effort. Excerpts.

"They (The Western governments and Baghdad supporters) were of the opinion that by hitting our soil resources and pulling us to the negotiating table, they would have secured a good world reputation for (Iraqi ruler) Saddam Husayn. Such was the propaganda aspect of the plots of our enemies.

"They meant to intimidate our people hoping that fresh threats of the resumption of the war of the cities would prompt the people here to hoard provisions and that our country's officials would be hard pressed by the people and that eventually Iran would do some indiscreet act in the Persian Gulf, paving the way for the creation of undue tension in the Persian Gulf. They had even prepared the Persian Gulf states to accept the consequences of an eventual encounter at the Persian Gulf.

"Then the rapid deployment forces of the United States staged a maneuver at the Persian Gulf. Consequently, more and more warships arrived at the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, preparing a situation whereby other countries, too, might do something to ensure our eventual defeat...

"They had counted on the success of their schemes, though in reality it proved otherwise. That is this last scheme of theirs worked only as much as had proved helpful their idea of the war of the cities. As a result of their schemes they realised first and foremost that our economic status is not such as can be harmed just where and when they decided to harm it.

"They realized, too, that our economic resources are varied and many, that we can protect our economy, and that by hitting our

economic resources they cannot possibly render us helpless. Our enemies then became frustrated.

"They thought we would involve ourselves at the Persian Gulf in the form of a series of retaliatory operations and get bogged down in a situation with no good end for us. Whereas in reality we had declared earlier on that we have firm programs for each stage of the war militarily and economically and that we know how to cope with situations...

"We had said (to the Baghdad regime and the Western governments) earlier on that if they had really opted to pinch us at the Persian Gulf, we too would pinch them here. We had threatened that for each vessel of ours hit by them, we, too, would hit one ship of theirs, regardless of whose ship it may be. To the governments somehow in connection with the Baghdad regime we said from the outset that once the Persian Gulf be unsafe for us it would be unsafe for all. And so it will be...

"Truly the lover of peace is the Islamic government. They (Baghdad regime) have repeatedly contaminated the Persian Gulf waters whereas our men have challenged the risk of death to cap the oil wells hit by the Baghdad regime. Our forces proved to be concerned about protection of the Persian Gulf environment ...it was eventually proved to the world that Iran acts discreetly ...but at the same time we warned our people that because of the likelihood of future confrontation we would like them to be ready and get some training for a rainy day...

"Infuriated with the dominating mentality in this country, the world arrogant governments have recently been waging a campaign for smearing the world view Islamic government by claiming that human rights suffers in Iran. And to document their claims they cite alleged behavior here with the Bahais, and with the mujafiqeen (members of outlawed mojahedin Khalq organization), and the monarchists, and the so-called nationalists and so on and so forth.

"Does the status of the Bahais in Iran provide them (the United States and the West) with a good excuse for publicity campaign against Iran? ...We do not bother to deal with them except for when they engage in such unconstitutional acts as drug trafficking, espionage and hoarding. Because Mr Reagan personally supports such things, is it sufficient proof for the Islamic Republic acting against the human rights?...

"Who says that to punish a terrorist found guilty of martyring a college student at a bomb blast or another found equally guilty of martyring worshippers at an earlier congregation for Friday mass prayers here signifies disrespect of human rights on the part of a government, while the crimes of the United States in Vietnam, in the Philippines, in Lebanon, in Palestine, in Iran, in Africa, in Latin America and in Nicaragua are not acts against human rights? Even in the United States as a living example, the whites kill the blacks and the Indian Americans. Is this not against the human rights?

"Is the French Government not against the human rights for killing people in New Caledonia? Did the United States not do anything against the human rights by occupying Grenada? Why should we see Mr Reagan feeling seemingly unhappy just

because some spies have stood trial in this country? Would the status of human rights in Iran be a cutting weapon against the Islamic Republic? It is such a funny thing to hear Washington say something about the human rights in the beginning.

"The human rights such as preoccupy the minds of such people as Mr Reagan, and Mitterrand and Moshe Dayan is a highly laughing stock.

The Majlis speaker said the U.S. and its agents have corrupted every place, and even the United Nations and the U.N. Security Council.

"(To Washington and Paris): You have realized neither our nation nor any other nation, nor our revolution, nor Islam. You are uselessly wielding rotten daggers against us..."

Reportage on Visit of Lebanese Islamic Leader

LD131203 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1030 GMT 13 Dec 85

[Text] According to a Central News Unit report, Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban, leader of Lebanon's Islamic Unity, spoke today at Friday prayers and expressed his gratitude for the stands taken by the Islamic Republic with regard to Lebanon's issues; he also praised the role played by Iran in solving the Tripoli problem, a problem created by Zionist agents for Muslim revolutionaries.

Emphasizing the solidarity of world Muslims, he said that the Islamic revolution is a pattern for world Muslims, that Iran is the only country that has already taken steps toward the realization of sovereignty of divine law. He called on the Iranian people to remain firm in their fight against global arrogance and the Baghdad regime until final victory.

Referring to the increasing expansion of Islamic revolution within the Palestine movement, he said: The Islamic revolution is at present the strongest base within the movement. God willing, the Lebanese and Iranian Muslim revolutionaries, by supporting the Palestinian Islamic movement, will eradicate Zionism.

Meeting With Musavi-Ardabili

GF150721 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
0430 GMT 15 Dec 85

[Text] According to IRNA, Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban, leader of the Islamic unification movement in Lebanon who is on a visit to Tehran, met Mr Musavi-Ardabili, president of the Supreme Judicial Council. During the meeting, the leader of the Lebanese Islamic Unification Movement lauded the consistent and effective campaign of the Islamic Republic of Iran to try to quell the flames of war in the recent internal clashes in Tripoli. He deemed the unity of Muslims an indispensable necessity following the trend of struggle against the enemies of Islam and stressed that the dedicated and devout forces of Lebanon firmly believe in this important factor in carrying out their struggle.

During the course of the meeting, Mr Musavi-Ardabili affirmed the moral support of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the Muslim

freedom fighters in Lebanon while alluding to the Muslims' common objectives in defending Islamic ideals and values in all the countries of the world, including the Muslim strugglers of Lebanon. The leader of the Lebanese Islamic Unification Movement expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran to terminate the crisis in Tripoli, Lebanon. He said: When the Lebanese Muslims faced major problems resulting from the Tripoli incidents, none of the Islamic countries responded to our plea for help except the Muslim brothers of Iran. This deep concern is greatly appreciated by the Lebanese nation and hails the effective steps taken in this regard. Reiterating the need for the solidarity of the Muslims of the world along the path of struggle against Israel, Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban said: Today, we are witness to the reawakening of the Muslims of the world and their efforts in this regard. We are confident that this campaign, inspired by the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, is blossoming and that the Muslims of the world have chosen the Islamic Revolution of Iran as a model.

Mr Musavi-Ardabili referred to the unanimity of thought and ideology of the two nations and the reason for the sense of responsibility that the Islamic Republic of Iran feels vis-a-vis the problems of Lebanon. He said: We greatly value the opinions and ideological stance of the Muslims of Lebanon. We are aware of the significance of the massive historical mission of the Islamic Revolution based on the beliefs and Islamic tenets which we carry on our shoulders on behalf of all the Muslims of the world. We believe that the great movement of the Islamic ummah, which began in Iran under the leadership of the imam of the nation and which attained brilliant victories for the Islamic ummah, will positively spread to other Islamic countries and triumph over the fronts of world oppression. The president of the Supreme Judicial Council added: We have high hopes for the Islamic Revolution and the momentous movement in Lebanon. We are certain that the Muslims will achieve rapid victories with all their might, and you can rest assured that we are always on your side and the side of other struggling Muslim brothers in Lebanon. We consider it imperative that the clergymen and religious leaders in that country establish a solid and united front to confront the enemies of Islam spearheaded by the aggressor, Israel.

In conclusion, Mr Musavi-Ardabili once again stressed the need for unity and concerted planning among all Muslims to attain these goals. He said: It will be very appropriate if the clergymen and religious scholars of Islamic countries are the pioneers of liberation movement and such campaigns. He reaffirmed that the Islamic Republic of Iran would not hesitate to assist in any such effort or endeavor because it is aware of the significance of this mission as its religious duty.

Received By Montazeri

LD151834 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1030 GMT 15 Dec 85

[Text] According to the report of the Central News Unit, Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban, leader of the Islamic Unification (Towhid) Movement in the Lebanon, last night met and conferred with the Grand Ayatollah Montazeri. In this meeting, the leader of the Islamic Unification Movement, while referring to the world-wide success of the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Republic of

Iran's centrality for all the world's Islamic movements, stressed: Today Islamic Iran has turned into the only source of hope for the deprived of the world, for the struggling nations, and also for the Islamic movements. He noted: I have expounded on this truth in all gatherings and assemblies, and especially, in Pakistan too, where I was recently, I stressed this point quite explicitly.

Also, while expressing his greetings and welcome, Grand Ayatollah Montazeri stated: We have always supported Islamic movements and shall continue to do so, and in the case of Lebanon, since the categorical majority of its people are Muslims, it is necessary that through strengthening the Islamic movement in that country, Islamic rule be established there soon with this rule conforming to the edicts of religion and of the Koran observing the rights of all the minorities in full. On the basis of this same principle, under circumstances whereby Israel and the United States and other powers who think in common with them are seeking to deliver blows to the growth and progress of the Islamic movement in Lebanon, it is the duty of all Muslims, whether Shi'ite or Sunni, to put aside minor religious and sectarian differences and not to allow Israel and its undercover lackeys to take advantage of these differences for the purposes of weakening Islam and Muslims. Grand Ayatollah Montazeri graciously reminded: General expectations, and especially, the expectations of the Muslim people and of the devoted youth of Lebanon, from the eminent ulema and committed clergymen of Lebanon, is that they should lead and direct this profound Islamic movement that began in Lebanon so that, God Almighty willing, final victory may soon be achieved.

Confers With Hashemi-Rafsanjani

LD151839 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1630 GMT 15 Dec 85

[Text] Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban, leader of the Islamic Unification (Towhid) of Lebanon, this afternoon met with Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani, speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly. In this meeting, Mr Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban, remarking on the current situation in Lebanon and confirming the just stance of the Islamic Republic toward the situation in the region, expressed the hope that Islamic Iran, with victory in the imposed war, may be able to rush to the aid and assistance of the world's Muslims and deprived more than ever. Then the speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, in the course of some remarks referring to the problems of Lebanon and the plots and tricks of world arrogance and of Zionism in the region, stated: The Muslims and ulema of Lebanon must, through solidarity and unity, preserve their united ranks and through full alertness neutralize every discord creating current, including the creation of pessimism among Shi'ite and Sunni brothers in relation to each other, and they must know that through their efforts and by reliance on Islamic unity, the victory of the Almighty is near.

Meeting With Interior Minister

LD160037 Tehran IRNA in English 1350 GMT 15 Dec 85

[Excerpt] Tehran, Dec. 15, IRNA — Iran's interior minister, Ali Akbar Mohtashemi said here Saturday that the ten-year-old civil war in Lebanon would not come to an end as long as the

superpowers maintain their political, social and physical presence in that country.

In a meeting with visiting leader of the Islamic Towhid movement, Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban here Saturday, the interior minister said that the only solution to the problem of Lebanon is unity of all Lebanese groups in their confrontation against enemies of Islam.

Meanwhile, Shaykh Sha'ban expressed the hope for further strengthening of ties between Iranian and Lebanese Muslims.

Stressing that the Islamic Revolution of Iran was a prelude to an Islamic revolution in the region, he said that the Islamic Revolution in Iran belonged to Muslims all over the world.

Visits Esfahan Prayers Leader

LD161910 Tehran IRNA in English 1422 GMT 16 Dec 85

[Text] Esfahan, Esfahan Prov. Dec. 16, IRNA — Visiting leader of the Islamic Towhid movement, Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban met with leader of Esfahan Friday congregational prayers, Ayatollah Taheri here Monday.

At the meeting Shaykh Sha'ban lauded the Islamic Republic's stance vis-a-vis the recent clashes in Tripoli and said that it was only Iran which supported Muslims in the city.

He further said that the Islamic Republic of Iran has strengthened Islam and revived it in other Islamic countries and is presently a pioneer in confrontation with the global arrogance.

On the role of Shaykh Sha'ban in leading Muslims in Lebanon, Ayatollah Taheri said that with such a leader as Shaykh Sha'ban Lebanon has a bright future.

The Ayatollah expressed hope that Iran and Lebanon would continue fighting the global arrogance side by side.

On Muslim unity, Taheri quoted Imam Khomeyni as saying that any one who tried to sow discord among Muslims was among colonialists.

IRNA Report on Interview

LD141412 Tehran IRNA in English 1005 GMT 14 Dec 85

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 14, IRNA — The leader of the Islamic Towhid Movement of Lebanon, Shaykh Sa'ban, currently visiting Iran, in an interview with the morning daily *JOMHURI-E ESLAMI*, Saturday said that while in Iran he hopes to visit Imam Khomeyni and Ayatollah Hoseyn 'Ali Montazeri.

Further on his plans, Shaykh Sha'ban said that he would travel to Kordestan and Sistan and Baluchestan Provinces to meet with Sunni Muslim leaders and also the Afghan Muslim mujahidin and refugees.

Shaykh Sha'ban told the paper that he will hold talks with the Iranian officials on situation in Lebanon, formation of an Islamic front by the Islamic Movement to intensify the struggle against the Zionist regime and also adopting a single formula to support the Palestinian cause and the Afghan mujahidin. Further on the Afghanistan crisis, he said that all Muslims should support them.

Meanwhile, Shaykh Sha'ban and members of the joint Lebanese Hizballah and Amal movement participated in a reception held by the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC), Friday night.

The acting IRGC commander, 'Ali Shamkhani, reiterated support of the Islamic Revolution for Lebanese Muslims against international arrogance.

Reportage on Visit of French Parliamentarians

Meeting With Majlis Official

LD161857 Tehran IRNA in English 1313 GMT 16 Dec 85

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 16, IRNA — Mutual relations between Iran and France were discussed in a meeting here Sunday between head of Economic and Financial Affairs Committee of the Majlis (Parliament) Hojjat ol-Eslam Fazel Harandi and the visiting French parliamentary delegation.

The French delegation, headed by Jean-Marie Dalliet arrived here Friday. The visit is taking place with the objective to improve Irano-France relations.

The French Embassy here refrained from issuing entry visa to Hojjat ol-Eslam Harandi to take part in a recent Polisario meeting held in Paris.

Meeting With Deputy Prime Minister

LD152019 Tehran IRNA in English 1754 GMT 15 Dec 85

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 15, IRNA — Deputy prime minister in charge of political affairs 'Ali Reza Mo'ayyeri said here Sunday that differences between Paris and Tehran over France's outstanding loan to Iran as well as French asylum to Iranian terrorist groups and its military and economic aids to the Baghdad regime continue to be the main impediments on the way of improvement of relations between the two capitals.

Mo'ayyeri said as long as such problems exist the "public opinion in Iran" would not sanction an improvement of relations with Paris.

The Iranian official was speaking to a visiting parliamentary delegation from France.

The spokesman of the French delegation expressed hope that Paris would adopt a 'positive neutrality' in respect of the Iraq-Iran war.

He also said that based on a recent policy declaration by Mr Mitterrand, there is room to hope that in a near future Paris

would not grant asylum to people who have committed a crime in their home country.

The French official expressed hope that as the French policy reverses in relation, ties between the two countries would improve.

The delegation arrived in Tehran on December 13th to study grounds for improvement of Tehran-Paris relations strained since outbreak of the Iraq-Iran war.

Paper Calls on U.S. 'To Bear Consequences' of Crash
LD161603 Tehran IRNA in English 1533 GMT 16 Dec 85

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 16, IRNA — The English daily *TEHRAN TIMES* in its Monday editorial titled, 'Varying Perspectives on Crash of U.S. Troop Plane' called on the U.S. to bear the consequences of its policies and not hide behind such silly scapegoats as 'technical problems'.

Comparing the recent DC-8 explosion with the 1983 attack by Lebanon's Hizballahs on the joint U.S.-French military headquarters in Beirut, it said that the repercussions of this attack were even greater than the Beirut operation.

It reminded U.S. policy makers that the oppressed Muslim masses are united and the loss of innocent blood will not go unavenged — a reference to last month's so-called 'rescue operation' by Egyptian commandos under the supervision of U.S.-Israeli advisors, which left tens of passengers of the hijacked Egyptian airliner dead. Excerpts:

"The American mass media have attempted to dispel rumours that the DC-8 explosion and its bloody aftermath was sabotage. The Reagan administration, too, has insisted that it had nothing to do with sabotage. But it seems that the U.S. administration is increasingly losing its capability in convincing the American public that it is able to protect its own interests in the world. No doubt the American nation is asking why their government, on the pretext of protecting its 'global interests' sends American soldiers into different parts of the world.

"What the Reagan administration finds difficult to accept is the fact that all freedom-seeking and Islamic movements of the Middle East region have unitedly mobilized themselves against U.S. imperialism and its agents. All these and other revolutionaries of the region have declared that they will strike at U.S. interests anywhere in the world and at any time.

"When U.S. and French troops stationed in Beirut were killed in suicide bomb attacks in Oct. 1983, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy in an interview accused Iran of being behind the attack. This was indeed an effort to divert U.S. public opinion away from the true depth of the tragedy, and the U.S. Government's responsibility for it. This time in the wake of a greater tragedy we have to wait and see which scapegoat the U.S. administration picks in order to extricate itself from the dire political and military straits it has gotten itself into."

Disabled Iraqi POW's Released to Turkey 15 Dec

LD151309 Tehran IRNA in English 1235 GMT 15 Dec 85

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 15, IRNA — A group of 97 disabled Iraqi POW's were released Sunday morning and handed over to Turkish Red Crescent officials. The POW's Left Tehran for Turkey on board an Iran Air plane.

The POW's prior to their departure were examined by a Turkish physician, a member of the Turkish Red Crescent delegation who took over the custody of the POW's.

The group is the ninth group of disabled Iraqi POW's to be released by the Islamic Republic of Iran for humanitarian reasons, bringing the total number released so far to 491.

While in Iran the disabled Iraqi POW's were provided with medical facilities and those who needed had undergone surgery.

Those released were pleased with the attitude of the Iranians and expressed their appreciation for the treatment of the camp officials.

Fa'q Muhammad, a 36-year-old textile factory worker, who was injured in his left leg and right shoulder and had undergone several operations, praised humanitarian treatment of the Iranian camp officials. He had learned Persian language while in POW's camp.

Another POW, a 57-year-old farmer who was forced by the Iraqi regime to go to warfronts, 'Abd al-Husayn Khaytan, also thanked the Iranian officials and said Saddam (Iraqi ruler) who was faced with shortage of manpower, had forced him to join warfronts. He said that he felt he was the guest of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

'Adb al-'Amr Amin al-Husayni, a 26-year-old technician from the Iraqi Oil Ministry, hoped that after the downfall of Saddam and establishment of an Islamic system in Iraq, all Iraqi POW's would be able to return to their families. He also lauded treatment of the Iranian medical staff while he was hospitalised in a military hospital.

Other POW's also praised attitude of the Iranian officials and refuted Iraqi Government's claims concerning mistreatment of the Iraqi POW's in Iran.

Speaking at the ceremony, the advisor to the interior minister, Akhoundi, who is also in charge of the commission for the Iraqi POW's affairs, thanked the Turkish Red Crescent officials for their cooperation in this respect.

He added that due to humanitarian reasons the Islamic Republic of Iran has so far released some 491 Iraqi POW's. However, he said, Iraq has only released some 500 of the Iranian POW's, some 80 percent of whom were civilians. He added that all the released 491 Iraqi POW's were on military service.

A Turkish Red Crescent physician, Dr Yusef Reza, examined the POW's and reaffirmed humanitarian treatment of the POW's.

Reportage on Combat Operations in War With Iraq**Communique No 2,321***LD161705 Tehran IRNA in English 1659 GMT 16 Dec 85*

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 16, IRNA — Iranian artillery fire on Iraqi positions in Kani Sheikh, Changuleh and Qasr-e Shirin in Western fronts on Sunday killed at least 10 Iraqi soldiers and destroyed three enemy trucks and several munitions depots, and weapons caches according to a military communique released by the Joint Staff Command of the Armed Forces here Monday.

In its Communique Number 2321, the Command says that the Iranian artillery fire also halted enemy's tanks, engineering operations and checked their construction of new fortifications in western fronts Sunday.

Iran's Muslim combatants pounded Iraqi positions in Kani Rash region in the northwestern fronts on Sunday, killing or wounding a number of Iraqi soldiers, reports the Joint Staff.

The Joint Staff further says that Iranian artillery fire on Iraqi supply routes, and newly-built fortifications in Sayyid Sadiq, Shanarah and Bani Banuk Sunday inflicted substantial casualties and losses on the enemy.

Exchange of artillery fire between the Islamic forces and Iraqi troops continued in the southern fronts on Sunday raging somewhat more heavily in Sharhani and Talayeh according to the communique.

Elsewhere the communique says Iran's Gendarmerie troops returned artillery fire of Iraqi forces from across the Arvand River Sunday, killing a number of Iraqi soldiers and demolishing several enemy bunkers and its military hardware.

Meanwhile, Iraq's long-range artillery fire on the City of Abadan in Khuzestan Province over the past 24 hours, damaged three buildings and caused fire in one location in the city.

Planes Bomb Iraqi Troops*LD170817 Tehran IRNA in English 0815 GMT 17 Dec 85*

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 17, IRNA — The Iranian war planes at 09:50 hours local time (06:20 hours GMT), in a successful mission, bombed a troop concentration center of the Iraqi forces, northwest of Faqqah Garrison, inflicting heavy losses and damages, said a Joint Staff communique issued here Tuesday morning.

The Iranian pilots who bombed the area based on (32.8 degrees, 47.23 degrees) coordinates, returned safely to their bases, the communique added.